

**STATEMENT OF JANET SNYDER MATTHEWS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY, AND HUMAN
RESOURCES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
REGARDING THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF THE PEOPLING OF
AMERICA**

May 20, 2004

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the National Park Service's programs and activities that commemorate, recognize, and illustrate the broad story of American immigration, migration, and settlement—the peopling of America.

The National Park Service's approach to history can be characterized as a broad consensus about the principal themes, stories, persons and events that, taken together, provide a comprehensive textbook on American history. The story of immigration, migration and settlement is one of the pillars of the American experience upon which our country's history is built. As the national census reminds us each decade, immigration and migration continue to play a significant role in America's future.

Recognizing the central importance that immigration, migration and settlement have had in American history, the National Park Service selected “peopling places” as one of the eight central themes that comprise the Service's thematic framework used for history-related activities. This framework, adopted in 1994, provides a broader view of history than the 1930's-era framework it replaced, which was focused primarily on achievements of political and military figures. The framework is an outline of major themes and concepts that help us to conceptualize American history, and to identify cultural

resources that embody America's past. It is used in the many aspects of history-related work the National Park Service engages in, from interpretive exhibits at national park units, to new area studies, to National Historic Landmark nominations.

The theme of peopling places examines human population movement and change through prehistoric and historic times. Centuries of migrations of both free and enslaved people and encounters among various groups have resulted in diverse forms of individual and group interaction, from peaceful accommodation to warfare and extermination through exposure to new diseases. Topics that help define this theme include: migration from outside and within; community and neighborhood; ethnic homelands; and encounters, conflicts, and colonization.

The National Park Service preserves the history of immigration, migration and settlement in the park units and trails that we manage, as well as through the National Historic Landmark program, the National Register of Historic Places, and relatively new internet-based programs such as the National Park Service's Teaching with Historic Places and *Discover our Shared Heritage* Travel Itineraries. We work with partners in other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and numerous non-governmental organizations to ensure that Americans can experience and understand these stories, and to recognize new sites that add to our collective understanding of the past.

The American story of immigration, migration, and settlement is a primary theme in nearly 40 units of the National Park System. The story of immigration is commemorated at the Statue of Liberty National Monument, which includes Ellis Island, and at Castle

Clinton National Monument. Together, from the mid-1850s to the mid-1950s, Castle Clinton and Ellis Island served as the port of entry for over 20 million immigrants to the United States, and from 1886 on, these newcomers were welcomed to our shores by Lady Liberty.

The story of settlement and migration is illustrated at a range of park units throughout the United States—places such as Jamestown Island, part of Colonial National Historical Park, in Virginia; the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, in Missouri; Fort Davis National Historic Site, in Texas; Fort Union National Monument, in North Dakota; Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, in Florida; and San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, in Texas. Twelve of our parks commemorate the exploration of North America. A list of the park units that interpret immigration, migration, settlement, and exploration as a primary theme is attached. Many other park units touch on these subjects in some way.

In addition, there are 23 national scenic and historic trails that are managed by the National Park Service and other Federal partners with strong participation by trails organizations. These trails commemorate historic and prehistoric routes of travel that are nationally significant. Of the 15 national historic trails established since 1978, 11 are significant as reminders of the fundamental role that migration, both forced and voluntary, has played in our history.

Since passage of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the Service has managed the National Historic Landmark program, through which we identify and recognize nationally

significant places that best represent the American experience that are managed by other entities. More than 150 of the over 2,350 designated national historic landmarks are associated with immigration, migration or settlement themes.

As part of the process of identifying potential landmarks, the Service conducts historic theme studies, which provide a broad perspective that highlights the places that truly illustrate or commemorate the nationally significant events, trends, or persons. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, the National Park Service completed several theme studies that relate to immigration, migration, and settlement. In an effort to begin updating those studies, the National Park Service has partnered with the Society for American Archeology to produce a study detailing the story of the first immigration into the eastern portions of North America over 10,000 years ago. This study, scheduled to be completed this fall, identifies some significant and threatened cultural resources that may be recommended for national historic landmark designation.

An important immigration-related site that has been designated as a national historic landmark is the U.S. Immigration Station at Angel Island, California. What Ellis Island symbolizes to Americans of European heritage who immigrated to the East Coast, Angel Island symbolizes to Americans of Asian heritage on the West Coast. In 1998, Congress directed the National Park Service to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of preserving and interpreting sites within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, including the Angel Island Immigration Station, that are related to immigration. The National Park Service, in partnership with California State Parks and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, helped develop a restoration and interpretation strategy

and secure \$16 million in state funds for restoration work at the immigration station. The National Park Service is also engaged in feasibility studies for a Pacific Coast Immigration Museum on the Presidio to interpret and connect West Coast immigration- and migration-related sites. It is anticipated that the museum would be constructed and operated by a non-profit organization, without National Park Service funding.

The National Park Service also manages the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's official inventory of Federally recognized historic properties noted for their local, state, and national significance. Although the themes of immigration and migration are not recorded within the National Register Information System, sites associated with settlement and exploration number about 4,800 out of the more than 77,000 listings on the Register. The Register also tracks properties by ethnic association; however, only 3,000 of the over 77,000 listings include reference to one of the seven groups for which statistics are maintained.

An example of a site on the National Register that illustrates the story of migration and settlement is Huddleston Farmhouse in Cambridge City, Indiana, which is maintained by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Weary travelers making the difficult trek westward on the National Road in the early 1800's stopped at the Huddleston family's farm for meals, provisions, shelter, and to feed and rest their horses. Another example is the Venoge Farmstead, in Switzerland County, Indiana, the site of the first commercially successful winery in the United States. The homestead, preserved and interpreted by the non-profit Musee de Venoge, illustrates the immigration of Swiss settlers to Indiana in the early 19th Century.

The National Park Service has used information contained within the National Register archives to develop the *Discover Our Shared Heritage* Travel Itinerary Series. Each National Park Service-hosted itinerary is a self-guided tour to historic places spotlighting different geographic regions and themes across the country. These itineraries expose Americans to a variety of places significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Each itinerary provides a description of historic places and their importance in American history (plus contextual essays), tourist information for historic places open to the public, and links to related preservation and tourism web sites.

Many of the National Register Travel Itineraries have been prepared through partnerships with local preservation organizations, historical societies, chambers of commerce, city governments, or statewide groups. The Travel Itinerary series is designed to help revitalize communities through increased heritage tourism, link well-known historic sites to other less-visited places, enhance awareness within communities of important historic properties and the value of preserving them, and to provide a valuable source for students, researchers and the general public searching for information about significant historic places across America.

The National Park Service also reaches out to teachers and students across the country through the National Register's Teaching with Historic Places program. This program, developed through a variety of partnerships, promotes the use of historic places as effective tools for enlivening traditional classroom instruction by generating excitement

and curiosity about the people who lived there and the events that occurred there. With over 100 lesson plans available on line, teachers can choose among nine lessons on immigration and 24 on westward expansion and pioneer America. Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans turn students into historians as they study primary sources, historical and contemporary photographs and maps, and other documents, and then search for the history around them in their own communities.

By making historic places more accessible to Americans, both the Travel Itineraries and the Teaching with Historic Places are helping to educate the public about our nation's past. A key aspect of that past is where populations of certain areas originated, which ties back to our theme of peopling places. We hope that these programs will result in more Americans having a better understanding of the movement and settlement of people that led to the development of this nation.

We are often described as a nation of immigrants and as a society in constant motion. Preserving the heritage of immigration and migration that we Americans each share is vital to our citizens and the continuation of our national experiment. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Historic continuity with the past is not a duty, it is only a necessity." That is what the National Park Service is all about, the continuity of the American story.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I will be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.